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ABSTRACT

A program designed to provide field based experience to students of education by engaging them in tutoring activities in elementary schools is described. This direct first-hand teaching experience is offered at the sophomore level of college. One important feature of the program is the control that each child's teacher has over the tutoring experience. The tutor must have a preliminary conference with the classroom teacher in which a specific task is identified, materials selected, and instructional strategies planned. Before beginning tutorial service the tutor makes an in-class observation of the pupil to be tutored. Teachers at participating schools assign tutors to children with specific remedial needs. Special arrangements are made for youngsters with various kinds of handicaps. At the conclusion of the assignment tutors are evaluated by their respective cooperating teachers, and the evaluations are forwarded to the appropriate university instructor. (JD)

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THE HELPING HAND: A TUTORIAL PROGRAM

Presented at the ATE National Conference
St. Louis, Missouri; February 4-7, 1976

Participants: Dr. Cornett Woodley, Associate Professor of Education and administrator of program

Dr. George Keem, Professor of Education and Director of Student Teaching and Field Experiences

The MTSU tutorial program which is administered through the Office of Student Teaching and Field Experiences is one of a number of programs designed to provide field based experience to students early in their academic career.

This program, which is a cooperative arrangement involving the MTSU Department of Elementary Education, Department of Youth Education and School Personnel Services and several Murfreesboro, Rutherford County and mid-state schools, enables students enrolled in Psychology of Human Growth and Development (Education 211) to become exposed to early first hand teaching experience. Twelve Murfreesboro and Rutherford County schools are currently participating in the program: Bellwood Elementary School, Bradley Model School, the MTSU Campus (Lab) School, Central Middle School, Hobgood Elementary School, Holloway High School, McFadden Elementary School, Mitchell Neilson Elementary School, Mitchell Neilson Primary School, Oakland High School, Reeves-Rogers Elementary School and Riverdale High School.[1]

Applications for tutoring assignments are completed during the first week of the semester, processed and distributed among the eleven participating schools. Teachers at the participating schools assign tutors to youngsters

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with specific needs such as remedial, catch-up or enrichment work in reading, writing, math, science, vocal and instrumental music, physical education, art, industrial arts, English and foreign language.[2]

One important feature of the program is the control that each child's teacher has over the tutoring experience. The tutor upon receiving his or her assignment, must have a preliminary conference with the classroom teacher in which a specific task is identified, materials selected and reviewed and instructional strategies planned. The tutor then makes an in-class observation of the pupil to be tutored before beginning the tutorial service which involves a minimum of two visits per week for five weeks.[3] Tutoring sessions are expected to last approximately fifty minutes. Additional conferences between tutor and teacher are arranged when needed.

Involvement in the program is a basic class requirement for students enrolled in Education 211 and approximately ninety-eight percent of the students participate.[4] Special arrangements are made for tutors with various types of handicaps including blindness, deafness and other impediments.[5]

Recently the tutorial program was broadened to include students attending a special school for culturally and economically deprived, poorly motivated and underachieving youngsters who could not adapt to the learning environment of the large public schools.[6] Tutors assigned to this school must be dedicated, and have empathy for this type of youngster.

In order to accomodate the large number of persons who are required

to tutor, the coordinator divides each semester into two equal terms. Approximately one-half of the tutors are scheduled during each term.

During the Fall semester, 1975, 312 tutors were placed in the eleven local participating schools, and an additional twenty-nine persons were allowed to make their own arrangements. Approximately 230 students will tutor during the Spring semester, 1976. Twenty-one will tutor in public schools outside Murfreesboro.

Last semester an evaluation of the tutorial program was initiated and completed. The principal source of data was a questionnaire submitted to teachers, principals and counselors representing ten participating schools and tutors who were members of seven Education 211 classes.

A total of 253 persons participated in the evaluation including 170 tutors, 77 public school teachers, 5 principals and 1 counselor. Participants using a scale of 1-5 (with 5 as the highest) were asked to rate the tutorial program with respect to: Length of Assignment, Appropriateness of Assignment, Benefit to Pupils Tutored, Benefit to the Tutors, University Administration of the Program and Overall Value of the Tutorial Program.

In evaluating Length of Assignment 80 participants rated this category 5; 91 gave a rating of 4; 53 evaluators assigned a 3; 21 persons gave a rating of 2; and 8 gave a rating of 1 to this category.

In rating Appropriateness of Assignment 85 participants gave a rating of 5; 90 evaluators rated this category 4; 48 gave this category a rating of 3; 17 rated this category 2; while 11 rated this category 1.

In dealing with the category, Benefit to Pupils Tutored, 110 evaluators rated this category 5; 97 gave a rating of 4; 39 assigned a 3; and 4 rated this category 1.

In evaluating Benefit to Tutored, 118 participants assigned a rating of 5; 71 rated this category 4; 43 rated this category 3; 7 participants rated this category 2; and 9 rated this item 1.

In dealing with the fifth category, University Administration of Program, 76 gave a rating of 5; 96 gave a rating of 4; 48 rated it 3; 18 assigned a 3; and 16 rated this category 1.

In rating the final category, Overall Value of Program, 89 assigned a 5; 114 rated this item 4; 38 gave a 3 rating; 5 gave this category a rating of 2; and 4 individuals rated it 1.

Conclusions

Tutors and administrators gave higher evaluations than did classroom teachers. Some teachers who wrote comments on the questionnaire indicated that the program was too short in duration, and that university tutors were not always dependable or properly motivated. The majority were well pleased with the program and wished to see it expanded.

A few tutors majoring in such subjects as home economics, psychology, business, agriculture and physical education were somewhat perturbed because they could not be placed in situations which would allow them to tutor in their respective fields. Most said that tutoring was a rewarding experience.

Foot Notes

1 All tutoring must take place in a public school. Students who live outside Murfreesboro and commute may make their own arrangments. This can be done in any subject area and on any grade level. At the present time schools in fourteen Middle Tennessee Counties are accepting students who request tutoring therein.

2 There is a special program for the gifted child at Reeves-Rogers Elementary. Tutors who are foreign language majors are tutoring Laotian youngsters who are enrolled at Riverdale High School.

3 Under certain conditions tutors visit the assigned school once a week for ten weeks.

4 Because of their involvement in several practicums, speech and hearing majors are not required to tutor.

5 The majority of these arrangements are made at the MTSU Campus (Lab) School. However, other schools including Reeves-Rogers and Bellwood have accepted handicapped tutors.

6 Holloway High School. All students assigned to this school tutor once a week for ten weeks.